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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SPEAKER
RAWHI FATTOUH DISCUSSES INTERNAL HAMAS DYNAMICS,
RECONCILIATION, REGIONAL SUPPORT

Classified By: Consul General Daniel Rubinstein
for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (S) Former Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) Speaker (and prominent Gazan) Rawhi Fattouh described three generational groupings inside Hamas today, and characterized each as more radical than its predecessor. The oldest generation consists mainly of religious leaders with little influence on decision-making. Members of the second generation, which came of age during the First Intifada, hold most of the senior leadership positions in Hamas today. The third generation is the most radical, and maintains ties with Salafist Islamist groups both inside and outside the Gaza Strip. Fattouh expressed pessimism about prospects for intra-Palestinian reconciliation, and predicted that Hamas would not agree to hold national elections in the near future. End Summary.

Three Generations Inside Hamas

¶2. (S) In a January 28 meeting with Polchief, Fattouh began with a description of Hamas's internal dynamics. He noted that the "first" or oldest generation, led by Abdel Fatah Dukhan, is closely associated with the regional Muslim Brotherhood and active in "da'wa," (preaching and mobilization). This generation has little influence in day-to-day decision-making, he said. More influential is the "second generation" of Hamas, led by Political Bureau head Khaled Mish'al, deposed Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, and "Interior Minister" Fathi Hamad. This generation is made up primarily of First Intifada veterans and was responsible for Hamas's emergence in the 1980s as a movement with a distinct identity from the Muslim Brotherhood. Finally, Fattouh said that a more radical third generation forms the base of Hamas's military wing, under the leadership of Ahmad Ja'bari and funded by Iran.

Links Between Military Wing and Salafists

¶3. (S) Fattouh argued that Hamas also contains within its ranks factions supportive of al-Qaeda globally, and locally sympathetic to Salafist Islamist Abdel Latif Mousa, who died in the course of a raid by Hamas security forces on the Rafah mosque he commandeered in August 2009. Despite Hamas action against Mousa, Fattouh said, Ahmad Ja'bari and his third-generation military wing retain ties to a number of radical Islamist groups inside the Gaza Strip, including the Dughmush clan, the Army of Islam, the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Nasser Salah al-Din Brigade. Fattouh said that no effective nationalist (as opposed to Islamist) competition to Hamas exists inside the Gaza Strip, claiming, "Other nationalist forces cannot confront Hamas because of its military capabilities. Hamas has assumed total control

in Gaza, and even Fatah has no strength to fight Hamas."

Pessimistic on Reconciliation

14. (S) Fattouh was pessimistic about the possibility of progress in Egyptian-mediated Hamas-Fatah reconciliation talks, which he termed a "waste of time." He noted, "I have worked on reconciliation since 1994, and it never worked." Hamas "does not want reconciliation," he said, adding, "They don't believe in power-sharing, because Hamas's political vision precludes coexistence with others."

15. (S) Fattouh was also pessimistic about the prospect that Hamas would agree to hold national elections. He predicted that Gazans would not vote for Hamas, because the reality of its style of governance has been "exposed" there. Hamas is in a comparatively better political position in the West Bank, "because people here have not lived under Hamas's oppressive regime," he added. Fattouh argued that Fatah needed to take a hard line with Hamas, saying, "After succeeding in the (August 2009) Sixth Party Congress, Fatah must stay in Gaza and fight Hamas." He concluded, "Many in Fatah are alienated because they failed to prevent the Hamas takeover (of Gaza in 2007), but they need to get over it."

Critical of Iran and Qatar; Praise for Egypt

16. (S) Addressing Hamas's regional allies, Fattouh urged the USG to confront Qatar on the issue of its ongoing financial support to Hamas. He predicted that Iran's

JERUSALEM 00000234 002 OF 002

domestic woes would not be enough to weaken its support for Hamas, adding that such an outcome could only be achieved through additional sanctions and military confrontation. "Islamists believe they have a divine power to face challenges," Fattouh opined, adding, "They must be confronted individually if they are to fear the consequences. Islamists will not be contained by diplomacy, but by a real confrontation."

17. (S) Fattouh said he had observed a sharpening in the Egyptian government's positions against Hamas of late, citing public statements by the GOE and construction of a steel barrier along part of the former Philadelphi strip between Gaza and the Sinai. "They have realized how dangerous Hamas could be to the security of Egypt," he noted. Fattouh claimed he had spoken the day before with Hamas official Fathi Hamad. In their conversation, Hamad complained about the impact of Egyptian efforts to interdict smuggling through the Rafah tunnels, saying, "Mubarak's steel wall is a U.S.-Israeli plan."

RUBINSTEIN